

REMARKS

Claims 1-35, 37-48, and 50-52 are pending in the present application.

In the office action mailed June 28, 2005 (the "Office Action"), claims 1, 6, 13, 21, 23, 38, and 40 are objected to based on informalities. The Examiner also rejected claims 30 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, and rejected claims 33, 35, 37, 48, 50, and 51 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,885,226 to Waldrop (the "Waldrop patent"). Claims 34, 36, 49, and 52 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 1-29, 31, and 38-47 are allowable.

With respect to the objection to claims 1, 6, 13, 21, 23, 38, and 40, these claims have been amended as suggested by the Examiner. Consequently, the objection to these claims should be withdrawn.

With respect to the rejection of claims 30 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, claim 30 and 32 have been amended to address the Examiner's rejections. The rejection of claims 30 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, should now be withdrawn.

It will be apparent from the amendments to claims 1, 6, 13, 21, 23, 32, 38, and 40, that the amendments were made independent of the cited references. None of previously mentioned amendments narrow or further limit the scope of the invention as recited by the respective claim. Generally, the amendments make explicit what is implicit in the claim, add language that is inherent in the unamended claim, or merely redefine a claim term that is previously apparent from the description in the specification. Consequently, the amendments to claims 1, 6, 13, 21, 23, 32, 38, and 40 should not be construed as being "narrowing amendments," because these amendments were not made for a substantial reason related to patentability.

Claims 33 and 48 have been amended to include the limitations recited by allowable claims 36 and 49, respectively. The amendments to claims 33 and 48 have been made to expedite the allowance of allowable subject matter. The amendments, however, should not be interpreted as reflecting Applicants' belief that the subject matter of the unamended claims is unpatentable, or that the Applicants have forfeited the subject matter of the unamended claims. Moreover, Applicants have not addressed the merits of the Examiner's rejection of the claims, or

whether the Examiner's characterizations of the cited references are accurate. Therefore, the presumption that Applicants have tacitly acknowledged the merit of the rejections or that the references cited by the Examiner are relevant to the patentability of the present invention should not be made.

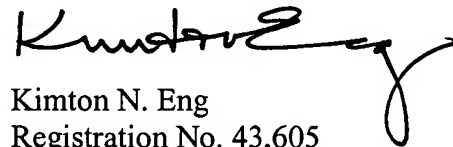
Claims 35 and 37, which depend from claim 33, and claims 50 and 51, which depend from claim 48, are similarly allowable based on their dependency from a respective allowable base claim. That is, each of the dependent claims further narrows the scope of the claim from which it depends, and consequently, if a claim is dependent from an allowable base claim, the dependent claim is also allowable.

For the foregoing reasons, the rejection of claims 33, 35, 37, 48, 50, and 51 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) should be withdrawn.

All of the claims pending in the present application are in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and a timely Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosures:

Postcard

Fee Transmittal Sheet (+ copy)

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